



AN ACCOUNT OF THE
 LIFE AND WRITINGS
 OF THE
 REVEREND EDMUND STAUNTON, D.D.
 MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL *K*
At Kingston upon Thames,
 President of Corpus Christi College, Oxford,
 And a Member of the Venerable Assembly of Divines
 at Westminster.

EDMUND STAUNTON was born at WOBURNE in Bedfordshire, England, in the year 1600. He was descended from the ancient family of the Stauntons in Bedfordshire. His father, Sir Francis Staunton, had several sons, of whose education he was singularly and peculiarly careful, while he left them good temporal estates also. He reckoned, that *wisdom, or learning, is good with an inheritance, Eccl. vii. 11.* He accordingly trained up his children in learning, not only that it might be an ornament to them, but also that they

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might thereby be serviceable to the church or commonwealth. This Edmund, who was one of the youngest, when instructed in grammar-learning, was sent early to Oxford University, and admitted into Corpus Christi College. Here he applied himself very closely to study, and made extraordinary proficiency in learning. And he obtained such applause, that while he was an under-graduate, he was chosen a probationer fellow in that college before eighteen of his seniors. When he was about eighteen years of age, he fell dangerously sick, and was much exhausted, and near unto death before his disease was understood; until a skilful physician found that it was a pleurisy, and ordered opening a vein. A surgeon was immediately sent for, but could not readily be found. At length the messenger brought him from a tavern, but he could not perform his work. He struck the patient's arm twice, but no blood came. In this mournful posture, the sottish swinish surgeon left his patient all night. When he had slept himself sober, he came the next morning very early, and knocked at the college gate. Upon this being opened, he ran immediately to Mr. Staunton's chamber, and asked if he was yet alive. Upon finding him alive, he speedily opened a vein in his arm, which bled freely; and the patient, though half dead, soon recovered, and became healthy.—Here we may observe, that through the drunkenness of the surgeon, this celebrated person's life was in imminent danger.—This part of our narrative clearly discovers the very awful and dangerous consequences of the sin of drunkenness, with the sottish and swinish nature of that evil, which is full of deadly poison.



THE subject of this memoir was also another time as remarkably preserved from being drowned, soon after he had commenced Batchelor of Arts, he went into the water alone to wash himself, and not being able to swim, he fell into a deep, where he could feel no bottom; but by the Providence of God he was remarkably delivered. He took hold of a little turf of grass by the side of the bark, by the means of which he climbed up, and was saved under God, and by his Providence.

THESE remarkable and merciful deliverances were preparatory to that good work of grace, which, about this time, the Author and Finisher of faith began in him. These dangerous circumstances wherein he was, with the wonderful deliverances from them, led him to serious thoughts with regard to his spiritual and eternal state, to close self-examination and fervent prayer.

I SHALL give the account of this in his own words, as found with Mr. Mayo, his biographer, who says, that he had this account in a manuscript under his own hand. "About the year 1620, I had many sad and serious thoughts concerning my spiritual and eternal state. Then upon the advice of Dr. Barcroft, I bought Brinsley's Watch, the second part; where the sins against the Commandments are set down in order, and I fell upon the work of examination; wherein this seems remarkable, that, reading over the several sins there mentioned, my heart (such was the blindness and deceitfulness of it) cried not guilty of any one of them: Whereupon I began to suspect my heart, and calling upon God to enlighten

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mine eyes, and discover my sins to me, and then reading them over again, I judged myself guilty, very guilty, even of most of the sins there set down and enumerated. After this I lay about two months under a spirit of bondage, being full of fears and inward trouble, so that many times I durst not close mine eyes in the night lest I should awake in hell. I thought every night the devil would come for me, and fetch me away; but anon, the Lord was graciously pleased to shine upon me, and this remarkable passage I shall never forget:— That, being one evening at prayer, all alone in the dark, I remember the chamber well in Corpus Christi College, and the corner of the chamber, I was very earnest with God for the manifestation of his love to my soul, and the assurance of pardon for my sins; and at length I brake out into these words, or words to this purpose: Lord I will not go out of thy presence; I will not go off from my knees till thou speak comfort to me;—whereupon I was immediately filled with a strong persuasion of the love of God to my soul, and with joys unspeakable and full of glory.”

FROM this period, the study of the holy scriptures was his peculiar delight; and he applied himself closely to the diligent reading of them, and to the study of divinity, and determined upon the work of the holy ministry. When he commenced Master of Arts, his father gave him the choice of the three learned professions, a Lawyer, a Physician, or a Preacher. The last of these was his choice. And he told his father, “that he had for some time past inclined his studies that way, and that he esteemed the turning of souls to righteousness to be

the most desirable work in the world, and that it would have the greater reward hereafter, though the other callings were like to bring in more wealth and honour here." His affectionate father did make no opposition to his good design, but rather encouraged his pious resolution. He first preached on the Lord's day afternoon at Witney in Oxfordshire, about six months, and had here his first fruits unto Christ, as Paul had in Achaia, 1 Cor. xvi. 15. being successful in winning souls to him. Here his labours were so acceptable, that people flocked from all parts to hear him. This was not pleasant to the incumbent, who occupied the more time in reading prayers, that Mr. Staunton might have the less time for preaching, and then left the church; but none followed his example except his clerk, whom he would not suffer to read the psalm. Mr. Staunton had preached some time from that text, *Buy the truth, and sell it not*, Prov. xxiii 23.—upon which the incumbent, when he met any coming into the church as he went out, would say, with a sneer, "What, are you going to buy the truth?" His continuance at Witney was very uncertain, and he had great opposition from the minister of the place; accordingly he removed, and became minister of Bushey in Hertfordshire. Here he had a welcome reception, especially from those who had any favour of religion. Here he preached and catechised on the Lord's day, and at other times, with great success; and many attended his ministry, not only the inhabitants of Bushey, but also those who dwelt at Watford, and other adjacent places. A respectable minister says, "That little time which Edmund Staunton spent in Bushey was not without good success—many persons, in

my own hearing, having acknowledged his ministry to be the means of their conversion."

ABOUT this time, he married the daughter of one Mr. Scudamore of Watford, by whom he had one daughter. But when he had been about two years in Bushey, Dr. Seaton, of Kingston-upon-Thames, in Surrey, wishing to have this living, and either making or finding a flaw in his title, soon dispossessed him of it. Dr. Seaton's Attorney, liking the ingenuity of Mr. Staunton, proposed an exchange, to which both parties agreed. Mr. Staunton preferred work to wages, and complied the more readily with this proposal, because his opportunities of service would be greater at Kingston. He reckoned his opportunities of doing good his greatest riches. But when Dr. Seaton had obtained Bushey, he would not part with Kingston; but either Mr. Staunton must be his Curate, or not go there. Mr. Staunton related this to Dr. Seaton's Attorney, who, abhorring such baseness, threatened to find a flaw in his title to Bushey.— And many of the inhabitants of Kingston, who greatly esteemed Mr. Staunton's ministry, so worked the Doctor, that he soon resigned, and Mr. Staunton took his place at Kingston-upon-Thames, in the county of Surrey. Here he continued about twenty years, endeavouring to fulfil the ministry which the Lord had given him. And being filled with zeal for the truth, he discharged the duties of his office with great diligence and faithfulness. He preached twice on the Lord's day, and catechised the younger and ignorant sort of people, teaching them also from house to house, though the town was large

and populous. He also set up a weekly lecture, which was supplied by several eminent ministers in their turns. By these means, together with his holy and exemplary life, he was instrumental in working a general reformation in the town, both among magistrates and people. He was loved by all the godly, and feared by the wicked. The good seed then sown did spring up in the place long. And the reformation here was not wholly external; for when he left that place in the year 1648, there were thirty persons who gave him a paper, subscribed by themselves, in which they owned him as their spiritual father; and doubtless, many more could have added their names to the list.

He seems to have been very successful this way. When preaching once at Warborough, near Oxford, one person of the congregation was so affected with his first prayer, that he ran to his own house, (which was at a short distance) and told his wife, that she should make herself ready and come to church, for there was one in the pulpit who prayed like an angel, so as he never heard the like. The woman hastened away with her husband; and God so ordered, that this sermon proved a mean of her conversion, and she proved afterward a serious and eminent Christian.

As a preacher, he was very plain, affectionate, and practical. He found, by much and long experience, that a plain way of preaching was most effectual to the ends for which that ordinance was appointed; and therefore he constantly used it,

even in the College and University. He could easily have appeared in another strain; but he preferred the work of his Master, and the advantage of immortal souls, unto every other consideration. And he was so affectionate, that he would not *only impart the gospel*, but *also his very soul*, to his hearers. Some say, that the life of preaching lies in the application; and here, Mr. Mayo says, he was indeed ever most lively. He was called the Searching Preacher.— This I have observed, says Mr. Mayo, his biographer, “That in every sermon, he would speak something still by way of trial and examination, ever and anon he would have his marks of distinction between the precious and the vile, the sincere person and the hypocrite.” This story he tells himself, “That having suspicion of one man in his parish, who made a great profession of religion, and often thinking of him in his distinctions; that very person afterward came to him, and said, you will never leave distinguishing, till you distinguish me into hell.” And he applied himself with all diligence to confirm his people in the truth, and to arm them against all false doctrines. He often said, that he was afraid to hear that rebuke from Christ another day, “Thou wicked and slothful servant.” When he visited his friends, if they did not ask him to preach, he offered. And he would say, “Is there no work here for a preacher?”

UPON the death of his first wife, he married a second, by whom he had many sons and daughters. Ten of these were buried in one grave, in the parish church of Kingston, on

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whom he laid a fair stone, with this epitaph fairly engraven
on it:

“ Here lie the bodies of
Francis, Richard, Mary, Matthew, Mary, Richard,
Edmund, Edmund, Sarah, Richard:
Children,
whom the Lord graciously gave to
EDMUND STAUNTON, D. D.
Late Minister of Kingston-upon-Thames,
now President of C. C. C. in Oxford,
By MARY his Wife,
Daughter of Richard Balthrope, Esq.
Servant to the late Queen Elizabeth.

TEN children in one grave! a dreadful sight:
Seven sons, and daughters three, Job's number right,
Childhood and youth are vain, death reigns o'er all,
Even those who never sinn'd like Adam's fall.

But why o'er all? in the first man ev'ry one
Sinned and fell, not he himself alone.
Our hope's in Christ the second Adam; HE
Who saves the elect from sin and misery.

What's that to us poor children? 'tis our creed,
God is a God to the faithful and their seed.
Sleep on dear children, never more to wake,
Till Christ doth raise you, and to glory take.”

HE left only one son living at his death.

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IN the year 1635, when the Book of Sports came out, he was suspended for not reading it, as many more were. He choosed rather to lose his place, than to give countenance to such an abominable practice. During his suspension, he took his degree of Doctor in Divinity at Oxford, which, he says, he did to put the greater honour upon his sufferings. His exercise was greatly applauded. But there were several Doctors in the University whose fingers itched to deal with him, because he was a Puritan; and a country minister, among whom was one, who was so miserably nonplust by Dr. Staunton in the disputation, that the auditors hissed him, and called for a candle, that the Doctor might see his arguments. Dr. Staunton took particular notice of this, with thanksgiving, ascribing all the glory to God; and making use of that text, him "that honoureth me, I will honour." God gave him liberally in that hour what he should speak, to the confusion of his enemies. And at this time also, he preached in the University, from Mark viii. 36. when he was signally countenanced from heaven, and the sermon made very successful in doing good.

WHEN the Assembly of Divines was called at Westminster, Dr. Staunton was chosen to be a member of that venerable assembly; and he was much esteemed there. He was several times called upon to preach before the Parliament, and his sermons were ordered to be printed. He was also appointed one of the six morning-preachers in Westminster-abbey.

IN the year 1648, when the visitors appointed for the University of Oxford discharged Dr. Newlin from the headship of Corpus Christi College, Dr. Staunton was constituted President, and succeeded him. He continued here above twelve years, till he was ejected for non-conformity by the King's Commissioners, at the restoration, 1660. — While he was President of that College, his whole deportment was very exemplary. He first put in execution all the statutes, which were most conducive to the advancement of religion and learning, and was often present at lectures and other exercises to encourage the studious, and reprove the negligent. He set up a divinity-lecture every Lord's day, early, in the College-chapel, for exercising the senior students, and initiating them into the holy ministry. He constantly catechised the juniors publicly every Saturday, and preached once or twice every Lord's day, to the edification of many, beside his constant course in the University-church and college-chapel. And, in compassion to the souls of men, he often preached in the country, for which he rather sought opportunities than declined them. And one of the impropriations belonging to the College, about seven miles distant, having but a small stipend, before his time, not sufficient for the external subsistence of a minister, he first went himself, and afterward desired some of the senior Fellows to go over by course, and preach unto the people, which they readily complied with. — When the College affairs called him abroad into remote places, he was always ready to embrace every

opportunity of doing good to the souls of mankind. If his business required his stay one day or two in any place, he seldom departed without preaching to the people.—He had a weekly meeting at his own lodgings for prayer and spiritual conference, consisting of college-members and others, wherein he bore a principal part; bringing forth out of his richly furnished store of experimental knowledge, *things both new and old*.—He was constantly present at the public worship in the chapel, morning and evening, to observe and reprove those who were remiss. And when he sat at meat in the college-hall, he always introduced wholesome discourse, tending to the instruction of those who were present. Spiritual discourse was his meat and drink: *His heart taught his mouth, and added learning to his lips*. When a portion of the holy scriptures was read at dinner, which was the custom there at that time, that all might feed their souls while they were refreshing their bodies; and if there were any difficult places in it, he either propounded them to the Fellows who sat at table with him, for explanation, or performed the task himself. If the chapter read afforded ground for practical observations, it gave great pleasure to the godly to see and hear, how he applied *the great things of God's law*, and raised the mind to some heavenly contemplation.—He was very attentive to introduce such only into the College as discovered some signs of saving grace, or at least such as were docile, apt to learn, and inclineable to that which is good. Accordingly, when any scholar's place

became vacant, and many candidates appeared for it, he desired them, some time before the election, to attend him at his lodgings, where he examined them privately, and procured also testimonials concerning them, from such as knew them; and if, after examination, such a number of electors as was requisite could not agree upon one of them, when, in that case, the election devolved upon him, he always let piety have the honour to turn the scale, if there was an equality, or near it, in other respects. It gave him great pleasure to see parts, learning, and piety, grow together: and indeed they are a happy conjunction; especially in gospel-ministers, whose work it is "to make manifest the favour of the knowledge of Christ in every place," 2 Cor. ii. 14. And in such, learning without grace, is like a ship without ballast; the least blast of applause is ready to drive him upon the quicksands of pride, or upon the rocks of opposition to Christ and to his truth, to his own ruin. Dr. Staunton's labour here was not in vain in the Lord: By means of his vigilant care, prudent government, and pious example, religion and learning flourished remarkably in this College; and many who were educated under his care, became learned, pious, and useful men. Among these was Mr. Joseph Allein, minister of the gospel at Taunton, in Somersetshire, and who was a great comfort to this holy man, while he continued in the College; and he was revived to hear, that he proved so eminently pious and useful in the church of God.

WHEN he was discharged from the College, in 1660, he left Oxford, where he had sown much precious seed, and watered it well with his prayers and tears. His departure was very like that of Paul from Ephesus, Acts xx. And recommending himself unto divine Providence to fix the bounds of his habitation, he went first to Rickmansworth in Hertfordshire, where he was well received by persons of all ranks, as a minister of Jesus Christ. His chief design was to settle an able minister there; but his best endeavours were ineffectual. However he found the way to that pulpit himself;—but because the entrance was narrower than in some other places, he sought out a *wider door* and more *effectual*. He preached round about that country, and in the adjacent ones, though an old man, and somewhat infirm, *spending and being spent* in the service of his great Master, till the uniformity act imposed a general silence upon the Non-conformists, August 1662. After this he was not willing to be idle; for he observed a day of fasting almost every week, either in his own family, or that of some other godly minister or christian friend. On such occasions, he endeavoured both to humble himself for his own sins, and on account of the abominations which prevailed in the midst of the land—See Ezek. ix. 4. And he discovered such a brokenness of spirit and dissolved soul, as those present could not readily forget. He then employed some hours in the word and in prayer often on these extraordinary occasions. His wife becoming infirm, he took apartments in a family at some distance, where he was very useful, so long as he lived

there, as there was a church in that house. The favour of the knowledge of Christ, and the sense of the power of the world to come, were deeply impressed upon the minds of the inhabitants, during his abode with them. From thence he removed to another family near St. Alban's, in which town he was instrumental in correcting some extravagances. His frequent removals seem to have been designed with a view of doing more extensive service and good in the church of Christ. His last removal of this kind was to a place called Bovingden, a little village in Hertfordshire, famous in history, because of this eminent divine living some time, and dying there. Here he had an offer of all accommodations gratis. He accepted the offer, but what he saved this way he expended in charity; particularly in the distribution of religious books in that village, and the adjacent places. He also gave some part in money to the poor. Here he attended daily to the duties of the family, and was very careful in the instruction of its members. He enjoyed much retirement in this place, an object which he loved dearly; and had he been born for himself alone, he would have chosen this always, as many worthy men have done, giving retirement the preference to the greatest preferments in church or state. But he had not so learned Christ. He often said, "Woe be to me if I preach not the gospel." He preached constantly. He was afraid that his Lord would come and find him idle. He often rode to St. Alban's, where he was useful to many; and once or twice in the year to London and Kingston. And when he

could not preach in a church to many, he preached in a chamber to a few; like Paul, at Macedonia, who preached at the river side to a few hearers of the weaker sex, Acts xvi. 13.—Neither the place nor the hearers recommend our preaching in the sight of God. He was naturally of an exceeding good temper and disposition, gentle, affable, and courteous to all; and his natural temper being embellished with the grace of God, made him exceeding amiable, and very useful in all his conversation. His government of the College favoured much more of lenity and mildness, than of sharpness and severity; and yet he kept his College in very good order.

As a Christian, he was much given to self-examination, a duty which is now much neglected by many. He was very careful to ascertain his evidences for heaven; of which we shall give a specimen here to a believer on the Son of God, he had *the witness in himself*, 1 John v. 10. particularly effectual calling; which is accounted a good evidence for heaven, as appears from Rom. viii. 30. 2 Pet. i. 10. Change of company; choosing the society of the godly, and shunning the company of the wicked, Psal. i. 1. xxvi. 4. 5. cxix. 115, Acts ix. 26. Universal obedience to all God's commands, Psal. cxix. 6. cxxxix. 23, 24. Love to the godly as such, 1 John iii. 14. Sincerity; desiring more to approve his heart to God, than his ways to men: aiming more at God's manifestative glory than his own profit, or the applause of others, 2 Cor. i. 12. Kindly meltings of heart, and deep mournings for sin, upon a sense of God's free love

in Christ Jesus, Zech xii. 10. 2 Cor. vii. 9. 10. Zeal for God, and against sin, John ii. 17. 2 Cor. vii. 11. A love of, and an earnest-longing for the appearing of Christ, 2 Tim. iv. 8. Heb. ix. 6. Rev. xxii. 20. And a careful sanctification of the Sabbath, Isaiah lvi. 4, 5. and lviii. 13, 14. These evidences of being born again of water and of the Spirit, he says, he found in himself, through the gracious operation of the holy Spirit upon him, if his heart did not deceive him.

He kept a journal of God's favours toward him. This was peculiarly helpful to him in the exercise of grace, and in remembrance of the divine goodness. We are very ready to forget the word which we hear, the sins which we commit, and the benefits which we receive. A journal or diary is very serviceable to keep us in mind of all these things; and a journal of our sins would soon make an awful catalogue, and might be very serviceable to set them in order before us on days of fasting, and on other occasions, that we might be thereby induced to apply unto the Saviour for pardon and purification *a*.

Dr. STAUNTON gave himself to prayer, like David. Mr. Mayo, his biographer says, "He was the most praying Christian that ever I was acquainted with." When he

* A very extraordinary journal of sins was found in the pocket of John Morris, who was executed at Chelmsford, in Essex, England, for burglary and robbery, as may be seen in the Cambridge Intelligencer, 25th August, 1798.

came to lodge at any friend's house, his custom was, after saluting such persons as came in his way, to retire to his chamber, and spend some time by himself, before that any friend could speak with him; and at night again, he shut up himself in his chamber a considerable time before any servant could be admitted. He often said to his godly friends, who came to visit him, "Come, might not we pray together before we part?" It might indeed be said, that prayer was his repast. He often wrestled with God as Jacob did.— He prayed in prayer, says Mr. Mayo; and he generally wept when he made his supplication, both in fellowship with others, and in secret. Mr. Mayo says, that he had the following passage under his own hand:—"The glory be God's; where I have shed one tear in prayer with others, I have, I think, (speaking within compass) shed two in secret betwixt God and mine own soul." He ordinarily performed this duty kneeling, even when he was almost overwhelmed by the multitude around him. He said, "The humblest gesture, as well as spirit, became the duty of prayer; and that he knew no way of wrestling with the Almighty, like that of lying at his feet, and prostrating ourselves before him.

He was a very strict observer of the Lord's day. Some have observed, that the sanctification of the sabbath is one of the first things which a converted person makes conscience of, and that he is no true Christian who is careless with regard to this.—This eminent divine was very watchful over his thoughts, words, and actions, every day, but more espe-

ally on this holy day. It was very rare to hear him speak one idle word, or to see him do one unnecessary action, upon the sabbath day. On account of his strictness in the observation of that day, he was like Joshua the high priest, and his fellows, *a man wondered at*, Zech. iii. 8. And he was also boldly censured for this by some. Mr. Mayo says, that he spent some sabbaths with him; but alas! he could not keep pace with him: He went from duty to duty, as bees do from one flower to another. From public duty to family duties; from family duty to closet duties, always finding much sweetness and comfort in them all. He used to say, "We must always be good husbands of time, especially of holy time: we must not spend that time, which is not our own, about our own things." He was accustomed to observe private fasts. He often passed whole days in prayer and humiliation, both by himself alone, and in conjunction with his family; especially before the administration of the sacrament of the Lord's supper, and when he found any corruption within beginning to prevail, or gain ground. He mentions one particular instance of spiritual pride, which he was greatly in danger of when a young preacher, and found much subdued by means of this humbling exercise. He set one day apart to make application unto God, with fasting, for strength against that sin; "and from that day forward he felt the neck and heart of it was broken," which is his own expression. And it was a common saying of his, "That spiritual pride is the special sin of young ministers." Trusting on such occasions, in this manner, was the ancient and

commendable practice of the Saints of the MOST HIGH ; but alas ! it is now almost become obsolete. See 2 Sam. xii. 6. Neh. i. 4. Esth. iv. 16. Dan. ix. iii. And yet the strong lusts of our deceitful and desperately wicked hearts will not be cast out, nor subdued otherwise. Our want of true humility is a great loss here. Dr. Staunton's biographer says, that " he was clothed all over with humility : " therefore he engaged more readily in this humble, and humbling exercise. Humiliation attends humility. He was very familiarly acquainted with the holy scriptures ; and, like Apollos the Jew, who was born at Alexandria, Acts xviii. 24. he was mighty in them, and made much use of them. If a good textuary is a good divine, he excelled in this. His memory was instead of a concordance. He could turn with great readiness to almost any text of the holy scriptures, and he discovered great skill therein. He certainly might be called the Gospel Doctor, as Wickliffe was ; because he was chiefly employed in the study of the holy scriptures, and they were his principal delight. He delighted more in them than the maid in her ornaments, or the bride in her jewels. He carried along with him the New Testament, or the book of Psalms, always. He generally read a portion of the holy scriptures first on the morning of each day, which was matter of meditation unto him all the day. And if any proper occasion offered in company, he raised useful observations therefrom, or proposed such practical questions, as were most conducive to the instruction and benefit of the hearers. In pursuing this plan, " his speech was always with grace, seasoned with

salt," Col. iv. 6. As salt is a noble preservative from putrefaction, so was his gracious speech in company, from the errors and sins which prevail among mankind. As salt on meat draweth out, and drieth up noxious humours, and renders it more fit for digestion, and more wholesome for nourishment : so was his well-seasoned speech to the conversation of every company ;—and as he well knew that salt must be rubbed in, and every vacancy filled with it, before it can produce its effects, so he delivered his gracious speeches with much animation and warmth, that they might properly affect the hearts of his hearers, under the divine blessing *b*. At night, when he thought of going to bed, he made search for some portion of the holy scriptures, which was suited to his then present thoughts, and that was the subject of his meditation when awake. So great was his delight in the law of the Lord his God, that he made it the subject of his meditation both day and night. See Psal. i. 1, 2. He seldom wrote any letter, without adding three, four, or more texts of the holy scriptures, as a postscript ; and these were very pertinent to the occasion of his writing, the condition of the person to whom he wrote, or to the times, and providences of God. His biographer says, that he received many letters from him, subscribed in this manner. And it was his custom when he visited any person, or met with any friend, to recommend some text of the holy scriptures unto their consideration at parting. " Pray," he would say, " let me have one text of scripture with you, and think of

b See Dr. Staunton's Christian Conference, page 30.

it when I am gone." He had much zeal for God and for his cause. He was frequently employed in projecting how he might promote the honour and service of God in the world. And he was frequently heard saying to his friends, "Come, what shall we do for God this day? How shall we trade with our talents for the advancement of his glory?" In this, he much resembled the pious divine, who was educated under his care, Mr. Joseph Alleine, concerning whom it is recorded, "That he never arose on the morning without some heavenly design of promoting God's glory and the good of souls." Dr. Staunton also gave evidence of his eminent zeal for God in sharply reproving sin. Though he seldom sinned in being angry, yet he was often angry with sin, and reprov'd it. We shall give one instance, where many might be produced. Supping once at an inn, between Oxford and London, where many fellow-travellers did eat together, and one of these abounded in vain and profane discourse; he spake to him, and laboured to convince him of the evil of sin, and of the curse and wrath of God, which did hang over his head; and, afterward, he unfolded unto him the exceeding riches of God's grace to repenting sinners of mankind, and his readiness to receive them through Christ Jesus. Having pointed out the disease, he discovered also the remedy. Upon this the person became more silent; but what farther effect the reproof produced upon him, we are not informed by the narrative: however, the discovery of the riches of divine grace made upon this occasion, greatly affected a young scholar, who was present. It melted his very

heart, under the divine blessing, and was a mean to deliver him from a spirit of bondage, under which he had been during some months.

Dr. STAUNTON also excelled in generosity. He devised liberal things, and drew out his soul to the hungry. He was charitable to all men, especially to those who were of the household of faith. He gave liberally to the poor. And "blessed is he who considereth the poor." Psal. xli. i. While others gathered and heaped up money, he dispersed and scattered his abroad, for the benefit of the poor and needy. His custom was, when he rode abroad, to put as much money into his pocket as he could spare for this purpose; and when he met with any indigent persons, he entered into conversation with them, and upon finding that they were proper objects of charity, he afforded them seasonable relief. In this particular, Dr. Staunton's custom resembled that of Cimon, the son of Miltiades, the famous Athenian General, who was much renowned for his liberality as well as for his valour. Cornelius Nepos says, concerning Cimon, that "footmen always followed him with money, that if any one stood in need of his assistance, he might have what he should give him immediately, lest he should seem to deny him, by putting him off *c.*" Such famous examples recal to our mind what is said, Job xxix. 12, 13, "I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him who had none to help him. The blessing of him who was ready to perish

c Nep, Cim. 4:

came upon me: and I caused the widows heart to sing for joy." And also, what is related concerning Cyprian, That he never sent away a widow empty. And he often said, "Let not that sleep in thy treasuries which may be a benefit to the poor." And, it is said, that Mr. Fox never refused any one an alms, who asked for Christ's sake. Cornelius Nepos says, concerning Cimon, who is mentioned above, that he was possessed of the greatest liberality: "for he was a man of so great generosity, that when he had estates and gardens in many places, he never placed a keeper in them, for the sake of preserving the fruit, lest any should be hindered from enjoying what he possessed at pleasure—Ofentimes, when he saw any one badly clothed, he gave him his own coat. His supper was so dressed for him every day, that he invited all whom he saw in the market-place, not invited elsewhere, which he omitted to do no day. His faithfulness was wanting to none, his service to none, his estate to none: he enriched many: he buried at his own expence, many poor people when dead, who had not left wherewith they might be buried &c."—And all this may be properly applied to our Author, and much more; for he even excelled Cimon in liberality, as his advantages were far superior. He was always ready to give spiritual alms to the poor in spirit, who hungered and thirsted after righteousness, as well as temporal favours to those who were externally indigent. Mr. Mayo, his biographer, says, that "for purse-alms, and spiritual-alms together, I never knew

his fellow " He often visited poor and needy families, or called for them as he passed by, and always left somewhat behind him for the benefit of both soul and body. God conferred upon him a competent estate; and by shewing pity to the poor, he did lend to the Lord, Prov. xix. 17. thus honouring him with his substance; accordingly he obliged many by his liberality, as Nepos says of Alcibiades &c.

He also excelled in Christian conference. Both his dexterity and delight herein were great; and as there is a gift of prayer and of preaching, so without doubt there is a peculiar gift of Christian and godly conference. Our Author enjoyed this to a very great degree: His heart was generally inditing a good matter, and his tongue was like the pen of a ready writer. His lips fed many, and did drop as the honey-comb. He always endeavoured to make his discourse profitable to others; especially by turning their merry and idle talk into that which was serious and useful—and their worldly conversation into a heavenly conversation; which he could do very handsomely, without giving offence. As Cornelius Nepos says concerning Conon, the Athenian, that, when the affairs of his countrymen were in a bad condition, and he had heard that his native city was besieged, "he did not seek a place where he might live safely himself, but from whence he might be helpful to his countrymen f?"

o Nep. Alcib. 3. f Nep. Con. 2.

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So Dr. Staunton always sought how far he might be helpful to his countrymen, especially by Christian conference. He warned the unruly, comforted the feeble-minded, and instructed the ignorant: even those whom others slighted, and did not reckon worthy of their notice, on account of their meanness and ignorance. He used to say, "That their souls were as precious as the souls of nobles." When he met with any person occasionally, either in the house or by the way, though a stranger, he immediately entered into conversation with such; and would ask what countryman he was, and where he was born—and, if he thought that he was born again: hereby taking occasion to explain the nature and necessity of regeneration, as Christ did, in his conference with Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, John iii. If he met with humbled and burthened souls, or such as were babes in Christ, he treated them suitably, and gently led them to the wells of salvation.

His patience and cheerfulness, under afflictions, were very remarkable. Mr. Mayo says, That he was one of the greatest patterns of patience that the age produced: He was never seen out of humour, nor heard repining, though his troubles were considerable. His cheerfulness under his afflictions was admirable. He thereby much recommended the gospel of Christ, and real religion, unto others. He used to be somewhat merry and cheerful in company ordinary

that he might the more recommend the ways of God, and the religion of Jesus to by-standers; and, it is said, that he sometimes had success this way. Judas informs us, that Macurius, by his pleasant discourses on all occasions, drew many into the ways of God. Dr. Staunton greatly lamented the unnatural hearts and divisions among Christians.

UPON the whole, what one said with regard to Mr. Perkins, may be also applied to Dr. Staunton:—"That as his preaching was a commentary on his text, so his practice was a comment on his preaching." And, here we have a shining example among the cloud of faithful and active witnesses, for the imitation of all mankind, in their different stations. Here grace or godliness, and fervor of spirit in serving the Lord, are clearly seen: Here religion and reason meet, and act in conjunction, for the glory of God, and the benefit of mankind; and these compleat the man.—For, says an eminent writer, "Religion is as necessary as reason to compleat a man: so that you are not men, but beasts, if you do not reverence God's authority, and live in subjection and obedience to him." Let this great and venerable character; this distinguished ornament of his age and country; this divine, eminent for his ability, piety, diligence, and integrity, be often in our view.

Wishart's Theologica, vol. 1. Serm. ix.

THE truly ornamental lives of the primitive Christians, and also of our Reformers in later times, were considerable means, in the hand of the divine Spirit, in producing the rapid and extensive spread of Christ's gospel, and advancing his spiritual kingdom among men. And, inattention to the *adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things*, hath contributed much to reduce practical religion to its present mournful decayed state, where it hath been long professed. If the publication of such ornamental lives shall contribute now, in the divine Spirit, in any degree, to quicken and revive us, as in former times, our end is obtained, and God will be glorified, according to Mat. v. 16.

THIS eminent servant of Jesus Christ—this burning and shining light, was at last seized, all on one side, with the dead palsy, on the 8th of July, 1671. His speech much failed him, and he afterward spake little and seldom.—A friend coming to visit him, asked how he did. He answered in the words of the holy divinely inspired prophet, “In measure God debateth with me; and in the day of the east wind he stayeth his rough wind, Isaiah xxvii. viii.—Some time after, he said to a friend who stood by him, “I neither fear death, nor desire life; but am willing to be at God's disposal.” A remarkable and very comprehensive saying. Like David, “the man after God's own heart,” 1 Sam. xiii. 14, confiding in the grace of God, under the pastoral care of the Lord Jesus Christ, the great Shepherd of

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the sheep, he feared no evil, though walking through the valley of the shadow of death, Psal. xxiii. 4. He saw the Almighty Redeemer swallowing up death in victory, 1 Cor. xv. 54. The saying is also full of Christian resignation to the sovereign disposing will of Jehovah.

AT another time, he expressed the following words, very audibly :—" I know that my Redeemer liveth." And soon after, he repeated Psalm xxxi. 5, in verse,

" Into thine hands, I do commit,
My sp'rit ; for thou art HE,
O thou Jehovah, God of truth,
Who hast redeemed me."

WHILE he had ability, he exhorted those around him, to make sure of heaven in the time of health ; to keep their evidences fair and unblotted ; to remember and keep holy the sabbath day. He spake with all the fervour of a dying man, and acted like one who earnestly desired to be instrumental of doing good to souls even with his expiring breath, in his last moments. When he could not speak himself, he desired others to read the holy scriptures to him ; directing to the places which he most desired, which were generally the Psalms. He was either without any pain, or felt very little. In this respect, there was a striking resemblance between Dr. Staunton's death, and that of the Rev. James

Beveridge, Minister of the Associate Congregation of Cambridge, State of New-York, North America —Mr. Beveridge sat up in the bed, and said, "I am a dying man;—I am dying fast;—but as to bodily pain, I am free of it. I feel no more of this than you do; nor is there a man in Barnet, (the place where he died) who is more at ease than I am."—Did you ever witness any thing similar to this? The resemblance in the deaths of these two eminent servants of Jesus Christ, was not less remarkable with regard to their use of, and their delight in, the holy scriptures on their death-bed. Mr. Beveridge was chiefly employed for three weeks immediately before his death, in the exercises of prayer and reading the holy scriptures; and when he was unable to read himself, he desired others, to read in his hearing, directing them to the particular passages, and very often made observations as they went along. And farther, Mr. Beveridge, at his departure, with an audible voice, twice repeated that passage in the book of Job, xix. 25, 26. "For I know that my Redeemer liveth, &c. &c."

On the 10th July, Dr. Staunton was deprived of the use of speech: He lay four days seemingly in a very comfortable condition, lifting up his eyes and hands toward heaven, with a smiling and cheerful countenance. A little before his departure, when a minister prayed with him, he discovered

A Christian Magazine, vol. iii, Feb. 4, 1799, Edinburgh.

much affection during the time of the prayer; and when prayer was ended, he took the minister by the hand, and held it fast, expressing his inward joy in God, and thanks to him, by outward signs. He died on the 14th of July, 1671, in the seventy-first year of his age.

HIS body was interred in the parish-church of Bovingdon above-mentioned, under a fair stone, with an epitaph engraven upon it, made by the Rev. Dr. Simon Ford, in Latin, Englished thus:—

“ To the memory of
that learned and very pious man,
EDMUND STAUNTON, D. D.
who resigned his soul
into the hands
of the Lord Jesus Christ
with the greatest peace,
in the
71st year of his age,
on the 14th day of July,
in the year of our Lord 1671.”

Mr. MAYO says, “ His modesty was such, that he never judged any thing he did worthy of the press; yet he consented that his *Treatise of Christian Conference* should be printed. And, having also by me a manuscript of his, intitled, “ A Dialogue between a Minister and a Stranger,” I thought good to print it with the aforesaid *Treatise*.”

Dr. CALAMY says, "that he published several Sermons preached before the Lords and Commons *; and his printed writings which I have seen are:—

1. *Rupes Israelis: the Rock of Israel*, a Sermon, preached from Duet. xxxii. 31. at Westminster, before the House of Commons, at their monthly fast, 24th April, 1664. 4to. Lon.

2. *Phinehas's Zeal in Execution of Judgment: or a Divine Remedy for England's Misery*, a Sermon, preached from Psal. cvi. 30. before the House of Lords in Westminster-abbey, at their solemn monthly fast, 30th Oct. 1644. 4to, Lon. 1645.

3. A Sermon at Great Milton, from 1 Theff iv. 14. 9th Dec. 1654, at the funeral of Mrs. Elizabeth Wilkinson. late wife of Dr. Henry Wilkinson, Principal of Magdalen-Hall, Oxford. Oxon. 1659. 4to.

4. *His Treatise of Christian Conference*. Lon. 1673.

5. A Dialogue or Discourse between a Minister and a Stranger, about soul-affairs. Lon. 1673. Both small pieces.

I suppose that he hath some other Sermons extant, which I have not yet seen. I have seen all the above pieces lately, in the county of Surrey, where he laboured many years, except the Oxford Sermon, and in different parts of Scotland."

* See his *Life* by Mayo; *Clark's Lives of Eminent Persons*, London, 1683, and *Wood's Athenae*, Oxon.

THE END.

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